

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 02291 061815Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 INR-10 SS-15 SP-02 L-03
PM-05 /052 W

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R 061731Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6416
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 2291

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO

PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PN
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLLOWING FROM ICA/PANAMA P R 061730Z APR 78 SENT ACTION USINFO
WASHDC INFO SECSTATE WASHDC REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE UNCLAS

MEDIA REACTION

E.O. 11652: N/A

1-PANAMA CITY.--COMMENTARIES SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE NEUTRALITY
TREATY CONTINUE TO APPEAR IN THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS,
PRIMARILY IN OPINION COLUMNS, NOT EDITORIALS, AND PRIMARILY IN
MATUTINO AND LA REPUBLICA, NOT CRITICA. EDITORIALS, ESPECIALLY
IN CRITICA, THE MORE RELIABLE GOP POLICY ORGAN, HAVE NOT
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STRAYED FAR FROM THE "WAIT AND SEE" OFFICIAL GOP LINE.

2-TWO REPRESENTATIVE COLUMNS APPEARED IN LA REPUBLICA OF APRIL 5
AND MATUTINO OF APRIL 6. REGULAR COLUMNIST MARIO AUGUSTO
RODRIGUEZ WRITING ON THE OP-ED PAGE OF LA REPUBLICA STATES
BLUNTLY: "... I CONCLUDE THAT THE PARCEL OF CONDITIONS,
RESERVATIONS, UNDERSTANDINGS AND AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED BY THE

U.S. SENATE . . . ACTUALLY SIGNIFY THE REJECTION OF THOSE AGREEMENTS AND THE PROPOSAL OF A NEW AND DIFFERENT AGREEMENT. THAT NEW AGREEMENT IS, IN MY COMMON SENSE VIEW, TOTALLY AND ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE TO PANAMANIAN DIGNITY BECAUSE IT NULLIFIES WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL JURISDICTION OVER ALL OF PANAMANIAN TERRITORY."

3-RODRIGUEZ LATER CONCLUDES: "IN MY JUDGMENT, THE GOVERNMENT OF GENERAL TORRIJOS HAS ONLY TWO OPTIONS. THE FIRST WOULD BE THE REJECTION OF THE NEW TREATY . . . AND THE PRESENTATION OF A SERIES OF AMENDMENTS, UNDERSTANDINGS, RESERVATIONS AND CONDITIONS TO RESCUE THE SOVEREIGN AND JURISDICTIONAL RIGHTS THAT BY LAW, REASON AND JUSTICE BELONG TO US . . . BUT IF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THE NEW TREATY TO BE ACCEPTABLE, IT WOULD BE CONSTITUTIONALLY OBLIGED TO SUBMIT IT TO A PLEBISCITE, BECAUSE IT IS EVIDENT THAT THAT IS NOT THE TREATY APPROVED IN OCTOBER 1977 BY A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OF PANAMANIAN." "

4-CARLOS BOLIVAR PEDRESCHI, A FOUNDER THOUGH NO LONGER ACTIVE IN THE INDEPENDENT LAWYERS MOVEMENT, IN AN OCCASIONAL COLUMN IN MATUTINO OF APRIL 6, CLAIMS THAT THE NEUTRALITY TREATY VOTE WAS NOT A VICTORY FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AS PRESENTED IN THE PRESS FOR THE FOLLOWING THREE REASONS: "IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND LET'S SAY IT ONCE AND FOR ALL, THE AMERICAN SENATE DID NOT RATIFY THE NEUTRALITY TREATY, AND RATIFICATION AND NOTHING ELSE UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER ASKED OF THE SENATE, AND WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER NEEDED FROM THE SENATE. WHAT THE SENATE DID WITH ITS AMENDMENTS, (ETC) WAS EXACTLY TO MODIFY THE TREATY. THIS MODIFICATION WAS BOTH FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE."

5-DR. PEDRESCHI IN HIS SECOND POINT ARGUES THAT "IT IS ALL TOO WELL KNOWN THAT THE TREATIES ORIGINATED IN THE EXPRESS DESIRE OF THE PARTIES TO ELIMINATE THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE U.S. ARISING FROM THE CANAL. . . . NEVERTHELESS IT IS ALSO ALL TOO WELL KNOWN THAT THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATIES DO NOT ELIMINATE THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT, AND IF THAT WERE NOT ENOUGH, NOW THE AMENDMENTS . . . OPEN SEVEN NEW CAUSES OF CONFLICT."

6-"IN THE THIRD PLACE," CONTINUES PEDRESCHI "IF THE CARTER VICTORY IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT THE NEUTRALITY TREATY 'RATIFIED' BY THE SENATE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA, THEN THAT IS NO VICTORY EITHER, BECAUSE AS SOON AS THE LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS LEARN OF THE TREATIES WITHOUT DISTORTIONS, THE EXACT TERMS OF THE NEUTRALITY TREATY, THEY WILL FIND GOOD REASON TO KEEP THE SAME CONCEPT THEY NOW HAVE ON THE POLICY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT TOWARD LATIN AMERICA."

7-IN HIS FINAL POINT, DR. PEDRESCHI ALLEGES THAT THE TACTICS
PRESIDENT CARTER HAD TO RESORT TO GAIN RATIFICATION, "VERY
PERCEPTIVELY ERODED HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE AND THE SERIOUSNESS
OF HIS ADMINISTRATION." ITEM UNQUOTE
JORDEN

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